

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. JOHN BOSI

May 18, 1976

Conducted by:

Dr. James L. Dodson

--and--

Mrs. Karen Sheridan

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Dodson: I wonder Mrs. Bosi, if you would give us your full name and tell us when you first came into the Valley and how long you lived here.

Bosi: Do you want my maiden name first?

Dodson: That would be fine!

Bosi: Ruth, it used to be Ruth Lowman and now it was Ruth Bosi and I lived in the Valley for 55 years.

Dodson: All of your early education then has been in the Valley. Is that right?

Bosi: Yes, the school was right in the back of our property. The Sepulveda - Leiman (?) school. They demolished it after the earthquake. The earthquake did not bother it, but they tore it down and rebuilt it.

Dodson: I see. It probably did not come up to the requirements of the Field act in relation to earthquake safety. Can you tell us something about your recollections of the elementary school, how it was like, when you went to school there?

Bosi: They asked me to go to school, they asked my mother if she wants to send me to kindergarden, when I was only four years old, because they had only five children to go to kindergarden and they needed six in order to keep the class. So the classes were very small. The school went to the eighth grade and we had usually two classes in each room.

Dodson: I see. What was the class that was in the room with you when you were in kindergarden?

Bosi: I don't remember. But I know all the other ones. First and second were together and third and fourth were together and so on. And the seventh and eighth grade were together.

Dodson: Do you think, that made it a little more difficult to learn, to have two classes in the same room, as they did have them?

Bosi: No, I don't think so. There is more discipline and the kids were quieter. When the teacher gave us one assignment, the other children were having their assignment, and we were studying. So, I would not think there was any disadvantage.

Dodson: I think you told us, before we turned on the recorder, Mrs. Bosi, that you had a daughter. Do you see much difference in the type of elementary education she had or the one you had here in the Valley?

Bosi: We learned a lot, they learn different things. And they were still disciplining them pretty good. But its just been the last, like seven or eight years I think that they have been flat in their disciplining but I think the kids are smarter nowadays.

Dodson: You think there is a real change that way, do you?

Bosi: Yah, I do.

Dodson: I imagine Karen is pleased to hear you say that. Would you say there is much difference in the sort of things they study now, or what they studied when you were in elementary school? Is the curriculum more full, more different kinds of courses or would you say it was about the same?

Bosi: No, I think they have more variety now. And I do not remember too much about politics in school, where I think they do stress more now, than what they used to.

Dodson: What do you mean by politics?

Bosi: Well, like the elections and they discuss candidates and things like that. And I don't remember those things so much. We had a little bit of it, but I don't think that much. We never had trail elections (?) like they do now.

Dodson: Apparently you feel then, the disciplin matter is the greatest change, is that right?

Bosi: I think so, because we had to be real quiet in school, while now, the kids are not quiet at all. And we never



thought of talking back to a teacher. We were scared to death of them.

Dodson: What I read in some schools, the instructors would be relieved, if all they did was talk back.

Bosi: Yah, nowadays, yah.

Sheridan: Mrs. Bosi, can you tell me some of the fun things you used to do when you were a teenager when you started to be out and around and date and things like that?

Bosi: I was not allowed to date. I was eighteen when Daddy died. And he would not...you know, we could not go out. And I started doing housework for other people, when I was sixteen. So, I really did not do that much, and I didn't go to any of the school activities or anything. That question is not for me.

Dodson: Was that typical for teenagers in your time, or just in your particular case would you say?

Bosi: No, it wasn't. A lot of the kids went to the football games and things like that, but it was just our family. I mean, there were eight of us kids and not much money, and so we all started to work or anything like that. And Daddy was very strict.

Sheridan: So, when you were eighteen, you did start to date though, and did everybody go to the beaches or I've heard mention of Spanish festivals or things like that. Do you remember doing any of those things?

Bosi: We had beach parties, but we had a lot of things going on at home, I mean... we played ball, a bunch of people would just come to our place on Sundays, and we played baseball out in the back yard all afternoon. And we'd have a wienie bake in the evening. But I never went to any of those festivals, you know, school festivals or anything.

Sheridan: A lot of people think that these days the kind of entertainment that involves large families is dwindling and I

think, that your kind of entertainment that you had with your brothers and sisters is something that I can't remember, but I'm sure, it was even more fun, than a lot of what's in a football game and things, don't you think ?

Bosi: Yes, I think that's true too, because, every evening we'd play hide and seek, or ditch and Sunday morning we had a tree, that was closed to Sepulveda Boulevard and it had branches clear to the ground and we dug a hole out of the bottom and we'd hide in there and we had a pocket book out on the street, and we'd pull the pocket book. And that lasted for hours, and you know, the cars go by and see the person when they'd been backing up we'd pull it in and they could not see us underneath that. And the neighborhood kids, you know... we'd all meet there, usually at our house because we were not allowed to go off of our property at that time. There was, there is more fun I think. I think the kids nowadays miss a lot of that togetherness, really.

Dodson: I think they are a little more up now to going for mechanical amusements such as looking at television or that sort of thing. Would that be your feeling?

Bosi: Yes, because we did not even listen to the radio hardly at all in those days and now, I'd like to say the television is very time consuming. I know, our kids watch television, you know, but...

Sheridan: Did some of your social life evolve around the church?

Bosi: No, not really, no. We'd go to Sunday school, but that was about all.

Dodson: Were there young peoples' organizations you belonged to?

Bosi: In our time they had them, but I did not belong to any. They had the M. I. F., a youth group at the Methodist church, but I did not belong to that.

Dodson: Can you tell us, what sort of vocational aims you had, when you were in high school, what did you plan to do or did you have any particular plans?



Bosi: No, I didn't have. I took a business course but, you know, I did not have anything particular in mind. And I quit school when I was in the tenth grade. I mean... financial. The closest high school is Van Nuys and we were three miles from there and we could not afford bucks to this. I quit school when I was sixteen years.

Dodson: Most of our students nowadays have part time jobs. Was this typical when you were in school; would you say?

Bosi: Yes, they did have part time jobs. They'd work during the summer and things. I don't remember so much after school, but I know during the summer they worked.

Dodson: I know, when I was in school, a part time job was an exception to the rule, that is... I knew very few students who have any kind of type of jobs. Would that have been true here in the Valley then, would you say?

Bosi: Well, most of the kids here in the Valley, I know they'd farm during the summer, during.. you know, when school is out, and... You mean as far as getting a job in a store or something like that? That was an exception I think, because I don't remember too many kids working like that.

Dodson: I have to remember, that the Valley was agricultural at that time to a considerable degree. I have forgotten about that.

Bosi: Yes, our work in here was all vegetables at that time.

Dodson: Mrs. Bosi, could you describe, what this particular area was like when you were a teenager. Can you say it was agricultural? What sort of things were grown here?

Bosi: A lot of tomatoes, onions, and there were a lot of citrus trees. And oranges and lemons, there were a lot of those. And there weren't very many people, Sepulveda Boulevard was very... there was just a two lane highway at that time. And we would be in the house and we could tell who is driving by, just by the sound of the car, because

there were that few people at that time.

Dodson: Were your family farming at that time? Did they have a farm?

Bosi: No, my folks had a grocery store at Sepulveda Boulevard.

Dodson: I see. Was the Valley largely divided into farms, would you say at that time?

Bosi: Yes, there was a lot of farms, it was mostly farm.

Dodson: Can you tell us anything about any of the sort of historic events that have happened while you have been living in the Valley? Such as your reaction to World War II and that sort of thing?

Bosi: Well, I worked at Lockheed during World War II, and...

Dodson: Could you explain what sort of work you did at Lockheed?

Bosi: I worked at the pier 38, putting in the throttles, and then, after the war I started rivetting. And I worked there for five years.

Dodson: That was quite unusual at that time for women to begin working in plants in that type of job, was it not?

Bosi: I think that was the beginning. I don't think women worked in that kind of job until the war did start.

Dodson: Did you find it difficult to learn that type of work, where there any particular problems that you recall?

Bosi: No, they showed us what to do, and it was not that complicated. I guess, I didn't have the hardest job.

Dodson: But you feel, that you, nevertheless, did quite a bit toward the war effort in that type of work, even if the men did, maybe not the hardest, but the heaviest jobs.

Bosi: Oh yes, I think the women helped. I guess most of the guys were gone. There were quite a few older men over there. I think they couldn't have got along without the women.

Sheridan: Mrs. Bosi, were any of your immediate family involved in World War II? Did they go into the service?



Bosi: Yes, my brother was in the Navy and my husband,... we weren't married at that time, he was in the army. And they both had seen action.

Sheridan: You were probably then glad to keep busy, while they were away.

Bosi: Oh yes, it really helped. And there were other boys here from the Valley, because there was such a small community that everybody knew everybody else, so we were always keeping track of where everyone was. We were trying to.

Dodson: You remember the reaction here in the Valley when you got the news of Pearl Harbour, what people did, what they thought what they said. Were they surprised?

Bosi: They were surprised, you know it's hard on the boys that were like age twenty. You know... they really had fear going in and things. I don't remember too much about that.

Dodson: Do you remember the reaction of the end of the war? Was there a big celebration here?

Bosi: Yes, it was really something. I was at Lockheed when they announced it, and everybody just screamed or was throwing things up in the air. And everybody went home early and there was a big gathering in Hollywood. Most of the kids in this area went to Hollywood, on Hollywood Boulevard and it was a mad house down there. It was really something.

Dodson: That seems rather strange, that in this area they went all the way to Hollywood to go to school.

Bosi: Not to go to school; they just went down there to celebrate.

Dodson: Oh, I see.

Bosi: I mean, they just gathered down there, you know.

Dodson: What are your impressions of the earthquakes we've had? Of course just now, we are getting forecast of future ones. What was your impression on the big one of 1971. Did it bother you in this location?



- Bosi: Well, we had broken dishes and things, and light things took right off the light balls and landed on the table, but we did not get any cracks or anything like that. We really were lucky, because where all the damage was done was just like eight or nine miles from here. So, we were lucky.
- Dodson: Yes, the principle damage was in the Sylmar and San Fernando areas.
- Bosi: Yes, and we were just like eight or nine miles from there.
- Dodson: Would you say, that people are jittery because of the predictions we have been getting lately of more earthquakes? Or do you think the people of the Valley are so accustomed to earthquakes, that they don't pay much attention?
- Bosi: We don't get that many I don't think here, but I haven't heard of anybody around here that has panicked out about it. But... it did not bother us. But we were not used to it in the older days, that's what you wanted to know. They did not have the flood controls, and Sepulveda Boulevard used to be just like a river and Donald's Service station (?) used to be on the corner and he'd get in his rowboat and row from one end to the other in his rowboat, delivering milk and bread to the people that could not get out. And my brother was sick in '37 in February, and we'd call a doctor from San Fernando, which is four miles, and he would not come down, because the water was so bad.
- Dodson: That's my understanding, that until one of these flood control works was completed, the Valley did have quite a flood problem.
- Bosi: Yes, it was really bad.
- Dodson: Was much damage done, in the sense of flooding houses and that sort of thing in the past?

- Bosi: No, there was just a lot of water on the streets, and I remember we used to dig sandbanks across, in front of the store, to keep the water out, but it wasn't... it would get up pretty high, but it seems, like the street was lower in that days. I don't know, because I know the water did not get into buildings or anything.
- Dodson: At the present time, I imagine there is no problem of that kind, in this area, is there?
- Bosi: No, it is all pretty well solved now. Haskell Street was the worst street, the last one I guess to be fixed because up until three years ago the kids going to Monroe could not cross Haskell. You know... the water was so bad, but that's the only street that I know, that was still pretty bad. I think they eliminated that one or two years ago.
- Dodson: Can you think of something else of historic importance here in the Valley that we have not asked about, that you think should be recorded?
- Bosi: No, I pretty well covered it. I remember when the Sepulveda Tunnel ... when they dedicated that to go over to cut the pass through the hill, and they had a parade also on the Boulevard, and this was a big event at that time. I don't remember the year either. It was either '33 or something like that.
- Dodson: That was about the time of the Long Beach earthquake. Did you feel that out here, or do you recall it?
- Bosi: Yes, we felt it. We were outside and we felt it, and it was... We thought it was a strong one and of course, like you say, it was in Long Beach centered, so we did not get the damage, but it was strong.
- Sheridan: Mrs. Bosi, you were about nine or ten, when we had the depression of 1929. Can you remember any of the effects



that that had on families or friends around you?

Bosi: Oh, I remember my Daddy worked for 15 cents an hour threshing beans and, ... because the store..., they were very generous people and they'd give credit and so he started working and then they started W.P.A. and so Daddy worked through the W.P.A. and he worked at the aqueduct up here and he worked there for a couple of years. And then he started working for the Departement of water and power. But it was bad and they had a lot of farming around here, so us kids would go out and pick tomatoes after the farmer had harvested what he was going to, and we'd go and pick the tomatoes and that would be our supper and so... things were rough during the depression.

Dodson: What would you regard as the greatest change in the Valley during your lifetime as you recall the changes that have taken place. Which one made the greatest impression or has made the greatest impression on you.

Bosi: Oh, we used to know everybody in Sepulveda, now we don't know hardly anybody. It has grown up fast and people have done moving in and out and I think that's the biggest change.

Dodson: That's a little bit like my experiences at the college. When I began we had 425 students. Now it is 25.000 and there are several I don't know. Can you tell us anything else about the changes. We've given you a little outline about the sort of things that we might be interested in or the future might be interested in.

Sheridan: Mrs. Bosi can you remember the kind of dresses that you wore?

Bosi: Yes, they were like about two inches above the ankle, so, were really neat. And of course...and then we'd wear bobby socks with a sandal, sandalshoes.



- Bosi: No, I don't. I don't remember.
- Dodson: One difference between my college days and the present situation, although I did not live in the Valley, would be narcotics. Now, I never knew a single student who ever used them, never heard of such a thing. What would be your impression of your days as a student?
- Bosi: No, I never heard of them at all and if a kid smoked a cigarette that was really bad and not very many of the kids did smoke at that time. And I never heard of drugs.
- Dodson: Now, this would be in line with my recollections. The whole word marijuana is a new one, as far as I am concerned. We never heard of it before. So that would be one change you would say between the present generation and yours in your school days?
- Bosi: Definitely! That's why I think kids in the older days I think used to be... I think they were brought up a little bit better myself.
- Sheridan: Mrs. Bosi, can you think of one living convenience or new modern technology that stands out to you, that we have today, that we did not have when you were growing up?
- Bosi: Well, the television is the biggest change I think, and of course we have better washing machines and things like that. I think all the appliances are better now than what they used to be.
- Dodson: Are you inclined to feel then that life is actually better than when you were a girl or do you look back to those days as more pleasant to live in? Which way would you choose?
- Bosi: No, I like it the way it is right now. Those good old days were not that good as far as I am concerned.
- Dodson: Is there anything in the history of the Valley that you remember particularly, pleasantly, that brought you happiness at the time, or that you think should be

mentioned as an especially good event in Valley history?

Bosi: I don't remember anything, you know, I don't know how to answer that.

Dodson: Well, you know I had various types of answers to that question. Now, one lady told me that when she got a new dress and went to Sunday School when she was six years old, This was the most important event in Valley history. And one man told me it was the birth of his first child which is not exactly the sort of answer I was after, but you see different things impress people in different ways.

Bosi: Well, I grew up here in the Valley, I've been here since I was one year old and so we got married and everything. We bought right here in the Valley so we really don't know anything different.

Dodson: Have you actually lived in the Valley then all of your live?

Bosi: Except for the first year.

Dodson: I see. Well, is there anything in the history of the Valley that you especially regret or look back on and wish ~~it wish it hadn't happened.~~

Bosi: No, I don't think so. It was pretty neat. We had old dirt roads and I like that old farm ... (?) ... Now everything is, it's just growing up so fast, but it was nicer when ~~lives~~

Dodson: You like the present technology better, that is all the conveniences but you could dispense for some of the...

(End of side 2)

Sheridan: Mrs. Bosi, when you were growing up, can you remember any problems with minorities, like we have today, or did you accept the Spanish children ect. as a way of life? Did you enjoy them? Did you enjoy their heritage?

Bosi: Yes, I don't think there was any conflict and one of my best girl friends was Mexican and everybody was treated like everybody else. There were several Mexican families, but I don't remember any trouble with any of them.

Dodson: So, there was not the ethnic consciousness that we sometimes hear about at the present time.

Bosi: No, there was not any at all.

Dodson: Do you happen to know personally any of the pioneers or their descendents who owned some of the great tracts of land in the Valley like the Lankershim Family or the Van Nuys Family or even some of the earlier Mexican American families?

Bosi: No, I don't, ... we did not know any of them at all. The only thing I remembered ...om...one of the Sepulveda boys, but he was a far descendent from the original ones, and I did not... you know, I just, I used to babysit for them.

Dodson: Is that right, can you tell us anything about your recollections of them?

Bosi: Well, I did not know anything...

Dodson: ...or of the one that you knew rather?

Bosi: I just knew. their last name was Sepulveda and they were just like any other family.

Dodson: I wonder, if any other members of this family live in the Valley at the present time, or do you know?

Bosi: No, I don't know of any. The one that I'm speaking of, he was living in Bakersfield the last time I heard, and I don't know if they are still living there.

Dodson: Do you know of any important historic sights or buildings or monuments in the Valley that we should know about,



that the public should know about?

Bosi: Well, the women's Club house is still there and that has been here as long as I remember. And it is on Parthenia Street and then the Sepulveda Academy. That house has been there since I was really little and it's a brick building. It was really a fascinating building when we were growing up because it was the nicest and the biggest building that I know of.

Dodson: Where is that located exactly?

Bosi: It is on Sepulveda Boulevard between Plummer and Tampa Street. And it is Sepulveda Academy now. They have turned it into that.

Dodson: It is a school then at the present time?

Bosi: Yeah!

Dodson: Do you think of anything else in this particular area that we might be interested in?

Bosi: I can't think of...you've covered it...I can't think of anything else.

Dodson: We are always looking to dig out something that we don't know about in advance. Some historic sight or structure that someone else has not told us about.

Bosi: I can't think of anything.

Dodson: Ah, can you think of any significant event or anecdote that we have not asked about at all that you think you'd like to have recorded? There may be something you thought of that we haven't thought of.

Bosi: No, I've been thinking about it for four or five days and I can't...you have it pretty well covered.

Dodson: Well, thank you very much, Mrs. Bosi then, for your cooperation in all of this. We deeply appreciate it.

Dodson: You have been listening to an interview with Mrs. John Bosi of 15543 Tupper, Sepulveda. The interview was conducted

by Dr. James L. Dodson, curator of the Los Angeles Valley College Historical Museum and by Mrs. Karen Sheridan, field deputy for the Museum. Date is May 18th 1976.